

## **Carolyn Raville's Story:** Persevering Through Limitations Towards Employment



Carolyn Raville keeps things simple. Her advice to anyone wanting to be successfully employed is: "Get yourself to work. Learn the job. Always do the best you can. Stay positive. And most of all SMILE!"

These are words that she lives by each day when going to a job that she truly enjoys. Carolyn lights up when talking about her journey to becoming a full-time employee at the Southside Walmart in Sioux Falls. But to fully understand her story, you would need to go back to around the year 2000. This is when Carolyn started to feel like she had "butterflies fluttering in her legs." What was happening was the onset of multiple sclerosis (MS).

Because of this progressive condition, Carolyn eventually needed a walker for mobility reasons. She also struggled with driving as her foot was too weak to move from the gas pedal to the brakes. She came to Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) in 2015, requesting assistance with seeking employment that would be compatible with her functional limitations. With the assistance of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselor, Emily Rudnik, and longtime job placement provider, Loni Broton, Carolyn was on the path to obtaining employment.

Since beginning her job in the deli at Walmart back on September 8, 2016, Carolyn has continued to feel positive results of working. When asked about what makes her job better, she's quick to answer: "the 3-tiered cart!" Even though it is an accommodation that was provided to specifically help her, her co-workers are also benefiting it by using it. With the assistance of DakotaLink, DRS researched the cart and purchased it. It was approved ahead of time by Walmart management and has allowed her to complete her job tasks more efficiently. Carolyn states that she puts everything and anything on the cart including up to 12 rotisserie chickens and more!

Another thing that Carolyn says added to her success, are the hand-controls that DRS helped her with getting installed on her vehicle. Because of her MS, she was also encountering more difficulty with driving. With the assistance of her VR counselor and DRS rehabilitation engineer, she completed an evaluation through Sanford Occupational Therapy. DRS ordered the hand-controls and then contracted with R&R Mobility Conversions, Inc. to install them on her vehicle. Carolyn then received training, so she could use the controls effectively. With the strength in her hands and the control knobs on her steering wheel, she feels safe and secure when driving.

Carolyn was also quick to point out the no-skid shoes that she was able to purchase through DRS's assistance. They have lasted two years and have really help her to ambulate throughout the deli.

Carolyn says she was also fortunate to have benefits specialist, Rhonda Erickson, help her navigate and get accepted for the Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities (MAWD) program. When she began working at Walmart she was employed on a part-time basis in which she needed medical insurance. Under MAWD, Carolyn receives Medicaid insurance to cover on-going medical expenses. Even though she has been promoted to full-time hours, Carolyn continues to receive MAWD and it saves her a great deal on monthly insurance premiums.

But most important, Carolyn just enjoys working. Visiting with the deli customers when getting their orders and problem solving with co-workers is what she likes best. In her spare time, Carolyn exercises in the therapeutic pool at Bethany Meadows and spends time with her five adult children and six beautiful grandchildren.

It is evident that she has formed many meaningful relationships with her co-workers and customers alike when walking around Walmart with her. Walmart is one fortunate company to have Carolyn on their team!